

Wit and Wisdom Poetry

The Poetry Project with MAA

Two Faces

Golden red two faces frame
Quiet glows round Summer's head.
Speak those moment eyes to me
Though I'll never know their name.

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Life is

Hawaiian shirts and sunset hair
Saying I love you, I hate you, and loving again
Late nights out and morning's despair
Going for it and just missing the ring
Going for it and taking it all
Storms and nature's sweetest air
Missing out and fitting in --
Just Being Alive.

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Others

I did not know them.
I do now.
Different seed packs
share like soil.
What matter peoples' petals are
different.
Are some scents purer?
Tended gardens
ensure no labors lost.

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The Tether

Home is the memory of my sailing man.
It rests deeply within my heart.
Memory -- your footsteps in the sand.
The kiss -- sweet for two must part.
Will your glass scan the skies for me?
Will the gulls sing my song to you?
Will your eyes behold searching out to sea
Our stars that glow for just the few?
Will fair weather joy your slumbered dreams?
Will the storm gently test your soul?
Will the heavens hold in bond your life?
Will its promise be as the child told?
Blue ocean -- have you a lighthouse for my sailing
man?
Have you the lighthouse where he's sailing still?
Oh, lighthouse -- offer yourself his haven -- home.
Bring him back -- oh please, say you will.
Each day I go out to the water and sand
Each day to the grey weathered wood.
Each day I seek out the blue for the white
I seek out the sea's gateway for you.
The surf my friend tugs longingly
To return my sailing man to me.
It speaks to me in his way lovingly
"I am home now and home I will be."
When home you come
I will have been waiting.
When home you come
Gently take my hand.

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I Will Look For You

I heard a little birdie say
I flew over one the other day
A golden dot so wee
But it caught my eye
Reaching out
As if to touch the sky.
It was nestled
Petals purple as regal robes
In light that danced
To a waltz of olde.
I thought it quaked
There was no breeze
The sun's rays gave it life
Delicate beauty drew my wings
My shield to set things right.
But what was right
What needed right
A birdie could not know
The light began to dance again
To the changeless waltz of olde.
I had to trust the purple robes
For the golden dot so wee
The sky held out its beckon
It was calling out to me.
I flapped my wings and rose to soar
In my changeless waltz of olde
Only the golden dot so wee
Had the power to make me hold.
I felt set free to the sky again
To the place known best to me
As a golden flash
Not so wee
Fixed a bond eternally.
I will look for you
Again next year
For your purple regal robes
For a golden dot
Oh so wee
You will always find me near.

Till we meet again
I sensed or heard
Was it only on a breeze
The sun's rays shown
Gave my wings new life
I will look for you
Again next year.

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Tapestry

In the swamps and wooded glens transcend
The isolated, confining spaces
That only Mother Nature sends
Where you will find wild spring flowers
Growing tightly in a bunch
Their colors form a type of tapestry
To accompany you at lunch
In some secret wooded glens
Where the wildflowers are found
They form a unique fairyland
Upon the shadowed ground
A mat of vibrant color is seen
Where they do grow
The fragrance of their creations
Is so wonderful to know
To me to lay among their numbers
Is a vernal right
And witness their intensity
In the warmth of bright, spring light
To have spent a lovely spring day
Deep within these hidden woods
And find that living tapestry
Makes me feel that all is good

Geoffrey Pray Whittum

Night Snow

It's the silver moonlight on a winter's night
The magic creates the most wonderful sight
Snow has just fallen and it stirs in me
A soft, quiet, mystical mood and it's soothing to
 see
All of outdoors in soft, quiet gray
Is pictured here in the dark side of day
It's simplicity that's illuminated in this wintery way
Gray shadows on white, why it's a canvas at night
A picture that's seen with the utmost delight
The barn is out back, the orchard too
Creating images that are spiritual to view
Moonbeams and trees on this winter night glow
They harmonize so perfectly on sparkling, fresh
 snow.

Geoffrey Pray Whittum

Tranquility

Tranquility waits for me in the woods
A place of peace
Where unanswered things are understood
A place so deep and hidden there
The great spirit dwells in cool, moist air
The mossy rocks glow with deep, forest green
Where crippled souls attain their dream
This place of peace with wholesome truth
Is where the inner spirit is free...
Cut loose!
So kneeling in this forest glen
I search for things that might have been
For no matter where the road of life may take me
And troubles will always abound
The total peace I find in praying
I find on this holy ground
The babbling brook, the chirping birds
are with me in my quest
For the tranquility I find in this hidden wood
It's pure, it's strong, I rest...

Geoffrey Pray Whittum

Sanctuary

In woods remote I find this place
The need is here to have my space
The sounds and calls that nature brings
Is mortar to my crumbled soul
The brook, the thrush, the creaking tree
Are all such great comfort to me
The solitude is so rebuilding
And to my soul energy refueling
To have been there once is not for me
But to return many times is a spiritual reality

Geoffrey Pray Whittum

Seek Him

The times they stink, you've had enough
You wish you were made of stronger stuff
You look inside, it's your soul you seek
And you wish the hell you weren't so weak
It's my attitude, I find that got me here
I am filled with sorrow, filled with tears
I look back on my life, all the wasted years
So filled with doubt, so filled with fear
How do I take myself away from this self-made
hell?
How do I free myself from this wicked spell?
It's God I seek to tell him my story
Such a lack of joy, no personal glory
I talk to God with a questing heart
And search for that place called a brand new start
I ask him in to heal me deep
It's his love and healing that I seek
The mountain will move and fall to the sea
He's come at last to set me free!

Geoffrey Whittum

I Lost the Line

-LOST & FOUND-

I lost the line
The line to your heart
Threw it out to sea
Hook, line and sinker
You baited and got the best of me
I lost the line.

I drew the line
The one that helped me define
Where you should or shouldn't be
Within the very heart of me
You crossed the line.

I held the line
Those unrefined times
When you tried to make your way
Couldn't make me stay
I held the line

I found the line
that tangled up my very being
Bound me up for eternity
Cut the cord and set me free
Saved by the very sea
That held a life line for me
I found the line.

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Inspired after a Lake Street Dive concert

The Sea

The sea moves
In purposeful tide.
It ebbs and flows,
crashes and subsides.
You, like the sea,
move to embrace
The glory of life
and the path
that it takes.

© SONedd 2015

Dedicated to Michelle Hespeler

Be The Cloud

Be the cloud
Evaporate
Rain down on me
Be the cloud
Ever moving
Changing
Shape, form, color
Holding moisture
Until it freezes up
Or weighs it down
Dispelling, dispersing
Droplets of
Warm or weary water
Frigid or freezing
Let it come
Come down
Pour down on me
Trickle, sprinkle
Mist
Become me
Simply be
The cloud

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Inspired by Thich Nhat Hanh

Castle by the Sea

She sang beyond the genius of the sea.
Wallace Stevens

I bake on a beach blanket-
Grains of sand, the shade of wheat flour
With diamond glitter,
Meteors that free fall and break
Sift through my fingers.
The feisty sea splashes, and slaps
Against the shore.

I notice an empty chateau across the way
High on the bluff.
Oh, how I visualize columns inside
With marble floors that shine.
A quiet porch faces the briny sea.
Except for the whistle of the wind
And the ghost that stirs,
There is no patter of little feet
Or beach towels flapping in the breeze
On the clothesline to dry.

I hold my pail,
Pour saltwater from the sea
A concrete mixer
Blending water and sand over my dry vision.
My children run to help with plastic pails in hand.
Seashells and dried starfish to emboss.
Together we built our castle in the sand.

That was then—
Today my moments are silent
Like that quiet porch—
Except for the whistle of the wind
And the ghost that stirs.

Linda Maselli Richardson

The Importance of Hats

Queen Victoria wore bonnets
Queen Elizabeth wears brims
Edwardian hats display like sonnets
A symphony of birdsongs or hymns

Hats inspire ribbon of Queen Ann Lace
Crumpets, teacups, and savoring high tea
Feathers, and flowers crown a woman's face
For fashion, position, or high society

Over time hats lost their luster... until
Jackie's pink pillbox made fame
In Dallas, JFK was shot and killed
Lee Harvey Oswald was to blame

Her pink Chanel suit bleeds red,
Our hearts were stained too
The clock stops.
Our country is in shock
Our President is dead.

Linda Maselli Richardson

Don't Delay My Autumn Parade

*"Autumn leaves breaths
the joy of my family tree."*

Autumn leaves are the breadth and depth of me.
When young, I faced the heights
Outside my front door.
The mountains crowned in a headdress
Of emerald, topaz, and rubies,
Leaves unite and flame
Like feathers that wave in wind.

I would call out to the mountain walls
My echo bounced back through the valley.
A threshold crossing of my youth.

Native Americans once danced
On these dear skin paths
Stitched with mountain steeples
And running baths.

They phoned heaven for rainfall.
Believed magical spirits lived
In the hollow of trees,
The singing river
And the chanting of the wind.

I hear them sing their song
As mountains beat their drums
Ready for Autumn's grand finale
In the hills, I called home.

My bloodline pulls me to hold Autumn's spirit,
Appreciate Autumn's parade,
Before the leaves unbutton from the trees
And our autumn roots are gone.

Linda Maselli Richardson

Fight For Freedom

Ukraine fight for freedom Feb/March 2022

Rage, rage, brave men in war do die
Women and children flee Ukraine
Hands from train windows wave goodbye.

Bombs boom as missiles fly
Buildings lay like firewood, blood-stain
Rage, rage, brave men in war do die.

A brave leader, their hero tries
To fight for Liberty's domain
Hands from train windows wave goodbye.

Around the world ally's standby
Judging a dictator's dominant disdain
Rage, rage brave men in war do die.

Rockets humiliate, enflame the sky
Their country fights a cruel domain
Hands from train windows wave goodbye.

Gold wheat, blue sky, their flag still waves on high
Are truth and GOD enough for freedom's reign?
Rage, rage, brave men in war do die.
Hands from train windows wave goodbye.

Linda Maselli Richardson

Eagle's Nest

I see him on the one-dollar bill
Now I see him here—

The huge basket of twigs
Partially broken by storm
Rest high up in the fork of the dead Pine.

Binoculars draw me close—
Oh how he is plumed
In a milk-white helmet,
A body that's black,
And a hooked beak of yellow sun.
Eyes rimmed with golden glasses,
And talons gripped around a branch.

His caw sounds through the air
Calling his partner
For changing of the guard.
Mother Eagle keeps watch
Over the eaglets in the nest.

Now he can fly— A pilot in space,
With feathers that fan.
His broad wingspan, a smooth like kite
Without a string in wind.

Soaring in clouds in salted air,
He soon comes back to dwell
With freshly caught fish
To feed his young.

It makes me think of Semper Fi,
Always faithful.

Linda Maselli Richardson

My Way of Healing

Should I get sick, do not call any doctors,
Allay my pain with wispy morning fog,
Then open windows and let first sunrays
Envelop me in their healing warmth.

Prepare me a bed of soft green moss
With covers made of stars and autumn leaves.
Turn off the ceiling fans, cool me instead
With dapple shade of ancient maple trees.

Instead of medicine I will absorb and savor
The rainbow mists of forest waterfalls
That carry youthful energy through ages
In their rapid bubbly foam.

I do not need IVs, put in my arms instead
First crocuses that broke through ice and snow,
Let their fighters' spirit fill my every vein
With its reviving, purifying flow.

The best of healers is my dear friend,
His mere presence makes me whole,
His gentle touch and words of love
Restore my body and my soul.

By Natasha (Natalia) Piendel

Candle

Gray autumn day is slowly sinking
Into a gloomy, chilly dusk.
Wet bare branches softly tap
Against a pane of misty glass
Protected by the solid walls
Of my secure, warm abode.
I think of those outside
Who walk along the darkened road.
At times like this I light a candle
To place upon the window sill
Of my old house at the crossroads
On top of gently sloping hill.
Seen from afar, my tiny lighthouse
Will help a traveler to find his way.
Guide like a star, dispel the darkness,
Give hope so needed at the end of day.
The candle flame, kin of a cozy fire,
Will make a passerby remember home
And hurry on to see the loved ones,
With happy thoughts to make him warm.
For every lonely soul caught in the dead of night
I'll hold my candle high and say, "Do not despair,
There is another soul behind this light,
I want to ease your way, I know, and I care.

By Natasha (Natalia) Piendel

Clown

"All world's a stage"
W. Shakespeare

All I can see are blinding stage lights,
Dark emptiness beyond
Alive with breaths and coughs.
I've stepped into my checkered pants,
Into my other self, a clumsy goofy clown
With hair that stands on end,
A frozen painted grin, red bulb for nose.
I trip over my feet in giant shuffling shoes,
Your laughter is my best reward.
I've made you happy, proud of yourselves,
Of being smart, much smarter than that dunce
Who stumbles, drops all things,
Gets whacked by falling props.
I hardly get applause or bravo calls,
No one would know me in the crowd,
No one has seen my real face,
An entertainer, jester, I have no name,
Just middle name of mocking laughter.
My sully tricks and antics mask my pain,
The silent groans of aging body,
Regrets and tears, thoughts of empty home,
The torment of my vulnerable soul
Trapped in the comedy of life
Upon this stage where every night
I act a happy fool not just for you but for myself.

By Natasha (Natalia) Piendel

End of Winter

On certain days you feel a stir inside you,
Aroused by a heightened sense of life,
Your heart expands, attuned to the entire world,
All colors brighter, all perceptions sharper.
You suddenly discern the breath of earth
Under the sunken porous snow,
Hear the awakening of roots
Prepared to break through soil
With powerful new growth.
You listen to the melody of chimes
That mark the hour somewhere afar,
Inhale sweet scents of sap and smoke
Brought by the breeze from distant farms.
Crisp air tastes like an elixir,
It innervates your every cell,
The dripping icicles with end-of-winter song
Set their rhythm inside your chest.
The afternoon spills out a golden glow
On people's faces, buildings, trees,
Young, happy voices blend with merry chorus
Of birds and melting snow streams.
Filled with all colors of the palette,
The day will settle soon into a lilac dusk,
The sun will linger long on the horizon
As if reluctant to depart.
The burden of years, doubts, fears - gone,
You live such days with open arms,
At one with everything there is,
You are in love, in love with life.

By Natasha (Natalia) Piendel

A Portrait of Alice

Sister of mercy
Molding my mind
Never be narrow
Ever be kind

Blackboard and Bible
Teacher's best tools
Carving my conscious
Writing the rules

Hippie in habit
Rock-n-roll hymns
Sage of the sixties
Vatican whims

Colors of Alice
Thriving since then
Loving and learning
Leap from my pen

William Lautenbach

Kites Over the Cemetery

As kids are chasing one another
Their happy yells and blissful laughter
Pierce the silence of the cemetery hill
They fly their kites, they can't be bothered
By headstones on the ancient graves.
All eyes are up,
Whose kite is fastest? Whose flies highest?
Whose looks the prettiest against the crimson
sky?
Each but a tiny spot tossed up and sideways
Across the wind-stretched sunset.
Oh, symphony of life,
The choir of children's voices
Merged with the orchestra of winds and
strings
That hold the kites between the earth and
Heaven.

I am a kite, I touch the clouds,
Dance to the rumbling drums of thunder,
Breathe the ozone of distant storms,
Taste tangy sprays of summer rains,
See far and wide through mists,
Get seared by scorching rays
And ripped and dragged by icy winds.
I take a dive, then soar against all odds
As some unknown force carries me on
Into the deepest depths of highest heights.
A daredevil little kite,
I strive to reach the very edge
And touch infinity itself.
My string is taut, I hope it's strong.
I pray, "Oh don't let it break,
Please keep me tethered to this earth,
My earth that always held me tight,
I am her child, I am her kite."

And yet a day will come, a windy day
On which a veiled relentless hand
Will touch my frayed, my tired string
With mercifully sharpest blade-
With sudden jerk I'll dash ahead,
Still unaware of the break,
Dazed by my newly weightless state,
Then pause, turn round, grope through space
And float on gently rising streams
Towards tantalizing dazzling light,
Towards other, yet unknown heights
Far from the earth, no more her kite.

By Natasha (Natalia) Piendel

The Bar Scene

The bar room is dark
The a.c. hums
A t.v. silently blinks

With a drink in one hand
And a smoke in the other
I feel the flames within

The juke box blares
The music transcends
I groove to my favorite song

There's laughter and chatter
From those at the bar
Yet I find myself alone

As I hide into
My inner self
The bartender cuts me off

With my money blown
I stagger away
A policeman gives me a nod

William Lauterbach

The Haunting of the Asylum

By the banks of the river Thames
Lies a barren skeleton
Buildings desolate and deserted
Haunted by a hundred ghosts

Some came in chains with broken brains
Some softly muttered mumbles
Some were shocked and tranquilized
Some minds maimed by surgery

Now nightmares linger in the halls
And echoes bounce off of thick brick walls
Where a helpless human refuse
Had their spirits quenched.

William Lautenbach

Ancient Astronomers

Babel built a tower toward the stars
In the land of Hammurabi's law
There the nighttime sky was strewn with gems
Filling ancient men with wondrous awe

Mystics of the great and mighty king
Gazed into the strange and vast unknown
As bedazzled eyes beheld in quest
Patterns placed above the earthly throne

Daniel was a captive Hebrew slave
And a faithful prophet for the king
Nightly Daniel studied heaven's face
And foretold the fate the stars would bring

Skies now probed by telescopic eyes
Men and women working as a team
Stars like sapphires beckon from afar
Calling those with minds that deem to dream

William Lautenbach

Wisdom of Athena

The day came calling at my door
With brightness bidding shadows go
As the dawning chased the night
So by the rising light I grow

I rode a mighty rolling wave
Which crashed and roared upon the shore
Soon the waters will draw back
And I will roll and crash once more

I kissed a maiden young and fair
Whose breath was as a new-mown field
As she pressed her lips to mine
I knew to her I had to yield

I heard a songbird sing its song
And knew a message it would bring
As it swiftly flew away
A voice within began to sing.

William Lautenbach

Simple Things

It's something anyone would do,
A simple dish to share with you -
Diced green bell peppers, milk-white onions,
Stirred with seasoned russets in a cast iron skillet
Waiting on a wooden trivet.

Remember how it's made?
So quickly the flavors and aromas fade -
The poise of one hand riding the back of the blade,
The other grasps the dark brown wood:
 As if to plant and plow, and form cornpones
 As only kind hands could ...

As if to steer, a skiff by the rudder,
Out into darker water
For trout and whiting, with silvery scales.

Dredged in the meal
In the butter to fry
Singing louder than cicadas in July.

Remember the customary motion that hands
 make –
The routine sweep to gather all of this –
The quick grind and twist of fresh-cracked
Black pepper?

Each portion a prayer, for the will to survive –
Whispered words – closed eyes
Only for a moment, each day at sunrise.

© David May 01/11/2017

Salvation

Sung by the Salvation Army Girl near Christmas

Beside her kettle
She sings her sweet gospel tune,
My life in his hands

Her sweet gospel song
Comforts this anxious heart
For cold days ahead.

©David May. 12/01/2019

For Lady Liberty

Though we overlook
Every prospect of peace in sight
Build high walls to demonstrate our might
Discourage equity and fair enterprise
Twist each promise and compromise —
She bravely faces every sunrise
Defies the darkness with her bright torch-light
Clutching her journal at the page
Where we find ourselves from age to age.

© David May 9/15/2018

Summer Quilt

The promise of longer days and warming sun
Sticky spider webs are spun
Sand and toys for seaside fun
Fresh peach preserves so generously spread
On a moon shaped sourdough bun,

My neighbor walks her wily whippet once a day
The tabby stalks chipmunks just for play
Found in the grass – held captive or held at bay
Will they ever get away?

So little time to watch this folly,
Too soon the daylight fades to gray
For shadows climb the walls and
Shade the pavement and the narrow pathway,

Sparrows find their supper best
In the bushy shrubs and the soft loam's fertile crest
A treasure trove for hungry mates
When returning to the nest,

Then one by one the fireflies will show,
Cool nights come and sweaters warm us
By the campfire's glow,

So, take these memories to share –
Like little swatches for a patchwork quilt
Sew them together,
Wrap them 'round
Withstand autumn's frost and
Winter's cold night air,
All the time and love we'll ever need
Are waiting for us here.

© David May 8/13/2022

Dream Home

An Ekphrastic Poem

For "Family Home" by Christopher Todd

*"Save a place for me,
That's where I'll be,
Aboard the last dream home."
Nancy Wilson*

When I came upon this quaint, old house
I saw a place almost like home
It proudly stood apart from neighbors,
It safely sheltered those who live within.

Inside, the music of a piano attempts a minuet
The wafting smell of your Vienna cake
Baking in the oven,
The rasping radio roar of
Sunday afternoon baseball
Then, the lilt in your voice calling me for dinner.

Outside, this gem is set
Prominently on a generous meadow
Encircled by flawless and radiant turf
A border of steadfast impending fir trees,
A fresh coat of warm tropical turquoise
Verdant ground cover tucked along the foundation
All at play on a bright, resplendent, grassy acre

Then, out of time, and out of luck-
I must move on and leave the house of dreams.

©David May 04/12 2021

Deer at One O'clock

The ancient ones remember
When all open land was here
Little hoofs came walking, walking
Lighter than the soft night air

They still come grazing, grazing
On the tender fescues sweet and rare
Slender legs come walking, walking
Graceful antlers pierce the air

On misty summer evenings unaware,
Stiletto hoofs come stepping, stepping
Quietly by lamplight creeping
While the neighborhood is sleeping

Now then,
 See the dark recede?
 To woodlands they retreat
Gentle creatures, come again
While our village sleeps, remain
Guide the fawn and loving doe
For summer grass or winter snow
Your presence here sustain.

© David May 09/21/2021

Nothing You Can Do

Still my voice
You do not still me
Blind my eyes
I still can see

I am of God
God is in me
Nothing you do
Stops me from being free

You may have power
Bullets and bombs
I live in a world
Beyond your harm

Attack me with fist in glove
I live forever, I live in love

Attack as you will
Cause hate and pain
God's given power
Removes the stain

You are burdened with pain and greed
Whatever happens tis nil
Your evil ways feed your wrath
You cannot control my will

Do what you will fist clenched
It is to God that I am true
I live forever, I live in love
Nothing you can do

Matthew Borrelli

Our Mother

Walk with me to the sea
The model for living
It communicates intimately
With the land, the wind and the stars
It practices making perfect waves, never-ending
It vents its anger
Yet provides protection and life
The sea shows us how to live in harmony
Nothing is foreign to it
It is part of everything
As it disappears into the clouds
It reappears on our heads and flows back to its
mother
Ever-changing but true to itself
Hiding secrets, sharing them
As we are ready to understand
As any good parent
The sea is our mother

Matthew Borrelli

The Ponds

A Story of THE HALF-FILLED CUP

Two sisters in the womb
Ready to be born very soon
They'll be alike in so many ways
Live together for many days
As they grow they begin to part
Each one following the beat of their own heart
Many years they lived alone
No longer were they like each other's clone
As time went by they grew old
Decided it's time to rejoin the fold
Bought two pieces of land side by side
To build two homes in which to reside
Each plot had a pond waiting for its fill
In the back a raging river that could kill
The pond quiet and serene
Waiting to be stocked with each's dream
The river was the place to go
To put unwanted things into the flow
They brought olden memories
from winter spring summer and fall
The houses couldn't hold them all
Each sister had to choose
What to keep what to lose
Put into the pond memories to forever savor
Into the river those that had lost their flavor
The first picked things of joy
Into the pond these she did deploy
Her bad things to the river would go
To be washed away by the raging flow
Sister two not the same

To the pond she put her shame
All her good stuff she baled and tied
Brought to the river to be drowned by the tide
The sisters each day come to sit for a while
One with a frown one with a smile
One sits by her pond
Remembering things that make her fond
Her twin looks at her pond too
Seeing all that made her blue
One chose to remember what made her glad
The other lives daily looking at what made her sad
We must all do the same
Remember losses or what gave us fame
What part of life's memories you take with you
Which will keep you happy or keep you blue
It's a choice we all have to make
What memories of life we lose or take
No one else can tell what's true
In the end it's all up to you

Matthew Borrelli

A Flowering Rainbow

To walk across a rainbow
 To catch a shooting star
To hide behind the moon
 Such places seem so far

To praise the songs of sunshine
 To burst beyond the sea
To wade beneath the oceans
 Let open rivers be

To climb upon a moonbeam
 To live no more to die
Obey a mountain trembling
 And never ask it why

To cry upon an ocean
 To walk across the sea
To meet the water's sunshine
 So easily for me

To touch a roll of thunder
 That runs across the sky
To force a bolt of lightning
 Where eagles sing and cry

To smell the smell of springtime
 To bloom across the sky
To touch a leaving tree
 To step where birds do fly

To love just like a flower
 To sing a flower deep
To shine just like a rose
 That will forever keep

Walter D. Bolstridge
8/12/21

Haiku and Sennyu Poems

By Joan Chaput

one artist paints
a ruby-throated hummingbird
the weight of a brush

multi-colored zinnias
the hushed sound
of butterflies

ease
in the seagull's flight
untethered kite
Akitsu Quarterly/Winter 2017

dad's name
on the luminaria
a walk in the light
Mariposa/Spring 2021

on the pavement
night shadows shaking—
the wind's howl

What Is War

A stick, a stone?
 Much blood and bone?
Someone dying in the night,
 A man ready to lose sight?
Men falling into ruts,
 Upon the loss of all their guts?
Bullets flying in a flood,
 Men dying in the mud,
Men drowning in their blood,
 A man falling with a thud?
Is it an endless hole like that of a well,
 Or is it a midpoint for those going to hell?
Is it a place where men fight often,
 Or is it a story that ends in a coffin?
Do men say in war they find a goal?
 No, 'tis more a disease that works in the soul.
Much of our youth yells in a roar,
 "Why must we have this thing known as
war!"
Is it worth the lives that are taken?
 I tell you this thing is forsaken!
I pray it stays away from my door,
 This horrid thing that's known as war.
Why create this thing called war,
 Merely so one side might gain more?
He who makes war I say is a fool,
 For he too shall die by his own tool.
Bodies that lie on top of each other,
 Brothers that fight against one another.
The calling of cavalry into position,
 While all of the generals are making
decisions.

Soldiers putting bullets in their heads,
 After wishing they were dead.
Cannonballs they are a flyin',
 Many men they cause a dyin',
Is it a man who's shot in the eye?
 Or is it men crying, "Why God, oh why?"
The twisting of the knife,
 Will take many a life.
A man's effort is often in vain,
 From trying to keep from going insane.
Is it a dead man hung on a tree?
 Could it be someday you versus me?

No war is like dirt,
 And that's all it will be,
Forever and ever
 To mine and to me.

Walter Bolstridge
1974